

TEACHER'S GUIDE

Primary Source Document Collection

MISSION 1: "For Crown or Colony?"

Paul Revere's Engraving Depicting the Boston Massacre, 1770

This sensationalized depiction of the Boston Massacre was done as an engraving by Paul Revere shortly after the event took place. Although Revere is thought to have been present at the scene of the Massacre, he based his engraving on a drawing by artist Henry Pelham, and he exaggerates or omits certain details, for instance showing Captain Preston giving the order to fire. Widely reproduced, the engraving became an effective instrument of anti-British propaganda in the days after the Massacre.



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Transcript:

THE BLOODY MASSACRE perpetrated in King Street *BOSTON* on March 5th, 1770 by a party of the 29th Regt.

Unhappy Boston! Unhappy BOSTON ! see thy Sons deplore,
Thy hallowed Walks besmeared with guiltless Gore :
With faithless P—n and his savage Bands,
With murd'rous Rancour stretch their bloody Hands ;
Like fierce Barbarians grinning o'er their Pay.
Approve the Carnage and enjoy the Day.

If scalding drops from Rage and Anguish Wrung,
If speechless Sorrows lab'ring for a Tongue,
Or if a weeping World can aught appease
The plaintive Ghosts of Victims such as these,
The Patriot's copious Tears for each are shed,
A glorious Tribute which embalms the Dead.

But know, FATE summons to that sordid Goal
Where JUSTICE strips the murd'rer of his Soul.
Should venal C—ts the scandal of the Land,
Snatch the relentless Villain from her Hand,
Keen Execrations on this Plate inscrib'd,
Shall reach a JUDGE who never can be brib'd.

Source: Paul Revere, based on a design by Henry Pelham, The bloody massacre perpetrated in King Street Boston on March 5th 1770 by a party of the 29th Regt., engraving, on or about March 28th, 1770; from The Library of Congress Online, Prints and Photographs Division, <http://www.loc.gov>.